

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

OUTSIDE SYSTEM 16  
Approved for Release  
by the Central Intelligence Agency  
Date: 11/18/13 AR 70-14  
Historical collections

~~TOP SECRET ATTACHMENT~~  
~~SECRET GDS~~

August 7, 1978

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR: DAVID AARON  
FROM: NLC Review Completed. GARY SICK *u*  
SUBJECT: Discontent in Egypt and Syria

25X1 You asked this morning for the reports of discontent referred  
25X1 to in State's intelligence summary of August 6 [redacted]  
[redacted]  
25X1 [redacted] citing unhappiness in Egypt over  
25X1 Sadat's policies. Egypt's press is generally quiet or suppor-  
tive of Sadat.  
25X1 [redacted]  
25X1 [redacted] military's unhappiness  
25X1 with Egypt's "untenable" position in peace talks, and its  
25X1 "depression and confusion" as a result of Sadat's recent state-  
ment [redacted] 25X1  
25X1 [redacted]. The military reportedly is also questioning the  
25X1 wisdom of Egypt's break with the USSR in light of the U.S.  
25X1 failure to supply needed armaments.  
25X1 [redacted] educated Egyptians feel  
"let down" and "disappointed" by the Egyptian-American relation-  
ship. They do not understand U.S. reluctance to pressure Prime  
Minister Begin, given the U.S. "investment" in Egypt and its  
friendship with President Sadat. As a result, Egyptians are  
questioning American motives toward Egypt.  
25X1 [redacted] educated middle  
and upper classes consider President Sadat's peace initiative  
a failure, and are critical of Sadat for letting himself be  
"duped" by the Israelis. These same Egyptians were described  
as believing it shameful for Sadat to continue his pursuit of  
his initiative in the face of Israel's intransigence.  
25X1 [redacted] Sadat is under  
pressure to produce some kind of concession or tangible evidence  
that his initiative has yielded results. Those pressures are  
mounting but are probably manageable at least for the moment.

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CIA and I both disagree with the suggestion in the State report that the continuation of the Sadat initiative will result in internal problems for the Syrians. [redacted]

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[redacted] the Syrian military is upset about what is going on in Lebanon and that the clandestine opposition to Alawite leadership in Syria itself is continuing. But neither of those is associated in any way with the Sadat initiative. In fact, my view would be that Sadat's "failure" has tended to vindicate Assad and lend some strength to him internally.

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*Gary Smith*

*Paul Aaron*  
*to Ames*  
*8/7 1130*

FOR AN ALTERNATIVE PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP AND  
AT WORST MAY BE TRYING TO CIRCUMVENT THE  
PALESTINIAN ISSUE ALTOGETHER.

2. THE SAUDI LEADERSHIP WAS NEVER VERY PLEASED WITH  
THE SADAT INITIATIVE. FROM THE START, INFLUENTIAL  
ELEMENTS WITHIN THE ROYAL FAMILY WANTED TO DISASSOCIATE  
PUBLICLY THE SAUDI REGIME FROM SADAT'S TRIP TO  
JERUSALEM. THOSE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY, WHO  
ARGUED THAT LONG-TERM INTEREST LAY WITH THE EGYPTIANS  
AND THE US AND THAT TO DISAVOW SADAT WOULD THREATEN  
THESE RELATIONS, PREVAILED, HOWEVER.

3. FROM THE SAUDI PERSPECTIVE, INITIAL MISGIVINGS  
ABOUT THE SADAT INITIATIVE HAVE FOR THE MOST PART  
BEEN PROVEN CORRECT. THE ISRAELIS HAVE GIVEN NOTHING,  
THUS, HUMILIATING SADAT. MOREOVER, THE NUMBER OF  
MODERATE ARABS WHO SUPPORTED SADAT, PUBLICLY OR EVEN  
PRIVATELY HAS DIMINISHED AS THE TALKS HAVE DRAGGED ON.

4. THE SAUDIS BELIEVE THAT THIS HUMILIATION OF SADAT,  
THE STANDARD BEARER OF THE MODERATE ARABS, REFLECTS  
POORLY ON ALL MODERATES. FURTHERMORE, THE COLLAPSE  
OF THE INITIATIVE WILL CAUSE DIFFICULTIES FOR THEM.

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THE SAUDIS  
ARE AFRAID THAT, IF SADAT PASSES ON WITH HIS UNILATERAL  
EFFORT, INTERNAL PROBLEMS WILL DEVELOP IN EGYPT AND  
SYRIA. THE IMPRESSION THAT FAHD  
BELIEVES THAT IF THE SITUATION IS ALLOWED TO CONTINUE  
TO SLIDE, ASSAD AND SADAT COULD BE OUSTED. (WE HAVE  
HAD A GROWING NUMBER OF REPORTS OF DISCONTENT IN BOTH  
SYRIA AND EGYPT. WHOEVER REPLACES ASSAD OR SADAT, IN THE SAUDI  
ANALYSIS, IS LIKELY TO BE MUCH MORE RADICAL.

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5. THE SAUDIS ALSO PROBABLY SENSE A GROWING FRUSTRATION  
IN THE ARAB WORLD WHICH COULD BE AN EVEN MORE DIRECT  
THREAT TO THEM. FOR INSTANCE, MANY WEST BANKERS, WHO WERE  
PREVIOUSLY MODERATE IN THEIR VIEWS, ARE NOW ADOPTING  
A MORE RADICAL ATTITUDE. SOME HAVE EVEN SAID THAT  
THERE IS A NEED FOR A CHANGE IN ARAB LEADERSHIP,  
PARTICULARLY IN SAUDI ARABIA AND JORDAN.

6. ANOTHER SAUDI CONCERN APPEARS TO BE THE POSSIBILITY  
THAT THE ISRAELIS MAY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ARAB DISUNITY  
AND ATTACK EITHER SYRIA OR JORDAN. WHILE SUCH A  
PROPOSITION APPEARS UNLIKELY, MANY ARABS TAKE IT VERY

~~TOP SECRET~~

*Gary get me the reports*